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Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PM-05
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 /067 W
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R 171125Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8071
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2858

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, SY
SUBJECT: SYRIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

1. MAHMUD JUYUSH, LAWYER AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE LEAGUE FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SYRIA DELIVERED TO POLOFF THE FOLLOWING LETTER SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT OF HIS ORGANIZATION, DR. MARWAN AL-MAHASNI FROM THE MEDICINE FACULTY OF DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY, FOR PRESIDENT CARTER (EMBASSY TRANSLATION, ORIGINAL BEING POUCHED).

BEGIN TEXT: THE LEAGUE FOR DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY. APPRECIATING YOUR EXCELLENCY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS FOSTERING AND DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, THE LAGUE WONDERS, AT THE SAME TIME, AT YOUR PROPOSAL TO THE CONGRESS REGARDING THE SALE OF THE MOST MODERN PLANES TO ISRAEL. THIS PROPOSAL, IN FACT, IS COMPLETELY CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU CALL FOR IN TERMS OF DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN LIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE BEFORE YOUR EXCELLENCY AND THE WORLD AT LARGE THAT ISRAEL IS AN AGGRESSIVE RACIST STATE FLOUTING ALL HUMAN VALUES AND DOES NOT SHRINK FROM
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CONTINUOUS AGGRESSION ON HER NEIGHBORS AND ON STATES WHICH ARE MEMBERS OF THE UN. YOUR GOVERNMENT IN PARTICULAR HAS ADMITTED THAT ISRAEL MISUSED THE VARIOUS WEAPONS WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT PROVIDED FOR THE SAKE OF SELF-DEFENSE. ISRAEL INVADED LEBANON AND SHELLED HER PEACEFUL VILLAGES; KILLED THOUSANDS OF OLD PEOPLE, CHILDREN AND WOMEN AND WIPED OUT THE CITE OF 'AL-HUSENEYA TO A MAN DESPITE THE

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FACT THAT NOT ONE PALESTINIAN WAS LIVING IN THAT CITY.

THE USE OF CLUSTER BOMBS AND F-15S BY ISRAEL AGAINST DEFENSELESS CIVILIANS IS A FLAGRANT VIOLATION TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

THE LEAGUE FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC RECALLS YOUR GALLANT ATTITUDE IN FOSTERING AND DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN EVERY COUNTRY OF THE WORLD, AND APPEALS TO YOU TO CEASE PROVIDING ISRAEL WITH WEAPONS SO THAT YOU MAY ACT IN HARMONY WITH YOUR CREED IN DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS AND AFFIRM YOUR BELIEF IN WHAT YOU CALL FOR BEFORE THE WORLD AND PUBLIC OPINION.

PLEASE, MR. PRESIDENT, ACCEPT OUR HIGHEST CONSIDERATION.
END TEXT.

2. MR. JUYUSH SAID HIS ORGANIZATION HAS ABOUT ONE HUNDRED MEMBERS DRAWN FROM AMONG SYRIAN LAWYERS, JUDGES, UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, WRITERS AND JOURNALISTS WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS BOTH IN THE BROAD SENSE SUCH AS THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS BUT ALSO IN THE SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN SYRIA. THE LEAGUE WAS FOUNDED IN 1961 BUT HAS BEEN CURTAILED IN ITS ACTIVITIES BY THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SYRIA. NOW, HOWEVER, THE ORGANIZATION IS GROWING AND IS ABLE TO EXERT GREATER INFLUENCE. THE LEAGUE IS RECOGNIZED CONFIDENTIAL

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AND ENCOURAGED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD. MR. JUYUSH CITED AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES AN APPEAL FROM DRUZE IN SUWAYDA TO DETERMINE THE FATE OF SEVERAL DRUZE WHO HAD BEEN PICKED UP BY THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES ON SUSPICION OF ESPIONAGE FOR ISRAEL. THIS ORGANIZATION WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE THAT THE SUSPECTED INDIVIDUALS WERE WELL TREATED AND WERE PROPERLY DEFENDED. MR. JUYUSH ADDED THAT HIS ORGANIZATION WAS IN CONTACT WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND ASKED THAT THE EMBASSY PROVIDE HIM WITH HUMAN RIGHTS MATERIAL RELEVANT TO TME AREA.

3. THE EXISTENCE OF THIS ORGANIZATION AND ITS INCREASED ACTIVITY IN RECENT MONTHS IS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN. A RECOGNIZED INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATION EVEN IF CONSTRAINED IN ITS ACTIVITIES CAN AND ACCORDING TO MR. JUYUSH DOES WORK QUIETLY WITHOUT EMBARRASSING THE REGIME TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION. WE BELIEVE THAT AN ANSWER TO DR. MAHASNI'S LETTER EVEN THOUGH HIS LETTER IS COUCHED IN POLEMICAL TERMS WOULD BE TAKEN AS A POSITIVE SIGN OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THIS ORGANIZATION. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO GIVE JUYUSH THE CONGRES-SIONAL REPORT OF DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL COUNTRY SUBMISSIONS

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ON HUMAN RIGHTS IF DEPARTMENT CAN POUCH AN EXTRA COPY OF
THE REPORT.
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